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ABSTRACT

This workplace skills course on managing stress on the job is designed to provide an opportunity to develop the skills needed to meet the stress and reduce the "overload." Introductory material includes a course description, objectives, and course topics. The course consists of 24 sessions, each of which has these components: teacher tips, objectives, topical outline, methods, evaluation, and information sheets and handouts. Topics covered in the sessions include the following: defining stress; learning physical symptoms; using appropriate management techniques; and adapting work situations to combat stress. (YLB)

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MERCER COUNTY
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# Managing Stress on the Job

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# P.R.I.D.E.

## PEOPLE RETRAINING for INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE

CF 070 175



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# Managing Stress on the Job

**Mercer County Community College**

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National Workplace Literacy Program

**1995**

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## *WORKPLACE SKILLS TRAINING PHILOSOPHY*

A factory or service center creates a classroom that is very different from the one we are used to seeing in colleges and adult schools, so it only follows that our approach to teaching in the factory should also differ.

Our goal is to teach employees skills that they need in order to be functional and successful in their work environment, and encourage them to apply those skills on the job and at home. For example, we motivate students to do the following:

- work more efficiently and more safely
- make fewer mistakes
- solve problems working interactively
- take greater responsibility for their jobs
- recognize the interconnectedness of the various jobs in their workplace
- be better communicators in the workplace

Company needs are revealed through a needs assessment. At that time, we also determine the basic skills needs of the employees. We are learner centered, as the individual employee's needs are considered alongside those of the company.

Once we have determined those needs, we develop curricula that incorporate basic skills, using the workplace literature (e.g. forms, applications, codes, abbreviations, charts and tables, handbooks, regulations, procedures, policies, memos, letters) of the company. Because each company is different, the needs and literature are also different; hence, we develop new materials for every company in which we teach. By utilizing these workplace items, we help students transfer and apply their skills directly to their jobs.

We rely on the classroom techniques of problem solving, cooperative learning, and group discussion. Our overall approach is concept based, with the emphasis on application, such as in role plays, dialogues, and group work. Despite the specific course titles, we incorporate the elements of math, English, and communication skills into all of our sessions.

In terms of students evaluation, after initial testing we give a pre-test and post-test in order to determine comprehension. Students receive feedback throughout the course from the instructor, as well as from fellow students as we sincerely believe in the powerful positive reinforcement of peer critiques and cooperative exchanges.

In essence, we believe that although we make the materials for the students with which to work, it is the students who truly make the class.

## *MANAGING STRESS ON THE JOB*

Too often changes at work or in our personal lives cause an overload of stress. Usually the effects of the stress spill over into most areas of what we do. This course will provide an opportunity to develop the skills needed to meet the stress and reduce the "overload".

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize personal stress response pattern
- Learn relaxation techniques
- Communicate to reduce or minimize stress
- Learn to reduce stress through exercise, nutrition, etc.
- Identify personal stress triggers

### COURSE TOPICS:

- Define stress
- Learn physical symptoms
- Use appropriate management techniques
- Adapt work situations to combat stress

### COURSE DETAILS:

- 3 class sessions
- 0.6 CEU

## TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 1

I. Ice breaker

II. Registration forms

III. About stress...

A. Share information and discuss: What it is; we each respond differently. Stress has been part of human existence since the cave man. It is a fact of life. Encourage questions and examples.

- FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

B. Physical stress response; Physiological stress response; Emotional/ psychological stress response. Explain in clear language using hand-outs as aids. Fight or flight response. Our own thinking process can contribute to stress. Explain and encourage questions and examples from the participants.

- FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

C. What can one do?

1. Recognize what you and your body do. Generate discussion by encouraging participants to consider their own stress patterns on the job. Draw out examples.
2. Learn about deep breathing, relaxation and visualizing techniques to interrupt the stress cycle.
3. Teach deep breathing and do bubble blowing exercise. Emphasize increase in oxygen to the brain; feel better; functioning improves. Using class discussion and examples of their particular job stresses have participants imagine using the techniques learned. In small groups have participants discuss job stress as they experience it and their attempts to handle it. Through open ended questions have participants evaluate what has worked for them and what hasn't.

## TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 1

D. Stress level personal inventory – HAND-OUT .Complete individually and discuss. Draw out discussion of personal and on-the-job stress. This is a tool to assist participants in recognizing their own stress patterns and then to consider making improvements in .their management of job stress.

E. Summary – You CAN make the changes within your control. Just DO IT. Keep practicing. Reinforce the importance USING what you learn.

## *MANAGING STRESS ON THE JOB ◆ SESSION 1*

### OBJECTIVES:

- Learn to recognize good and bad stress
- Understand the physical, emotional/psychological and physiological aspects
- Learn variety of relaxation techniques
- Utilize techniques to reduce stress at work or in personal life

### TOPICAL OUTLINE:

- Define stress and stress symptoms
- Deep breathing
- Muscle relaxation
- Imagery and visualization
- Positive thinking

### METHODS:

- Discussion and hand outs
- Working in small groups
- Role-plays
- Completing worksheets

### EVALUATION:

- Verbal participation
- Completing worksheets
- Coaching/helping one another in skill development

# *MANAGING STRESS ON THE JOB*

## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND:

**Stress** has been part of the daily lives of humans since they first walked the earth. Whether it's triggered by an attacking tiger in the prehistoric jungle or work/ home issues, it **is a fact of life.**

The stress we experience today is more intense and unrelenting than that experienced by our primitive ancestors. If confronted by a tiger, primitive man responded with the **"fight or flight"** reaction. That is, through chemical changes (an *adrenaline surge*) his body became physiologically prepared for either of two options: **flee or attack.** His choices were clear: either he was eaten or he survived and his body quickly returned to normal.

Today, the stress we experience is less obvious and more pervasive. We are subjected to it at home and in the office. For many, stress is not an ally but the cause of deteriorating health, lack of productivity and depression.

While our bodies still react biochemical as if the situation is instantly resolvable by fleeing or fighting, **the stressors we experience are often complex emotional threats where alternatives for mental "survival " are not obvious.**

## *LEARN TO MONITOR YOUR OWN PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO STRESS*

Here are a variety of techniques designed to INHIBIT the stress response:

1. Deep breathing (diaphragmatic breathing)
2. Muscle relaxation
3. Imagery and visualization exercises
4. Biofeedback training – instruments which measure muscle activity, electrical skin conductance, etc.
   ...see a professional...

AND/OR

Learn to be more aware of your own internal bodily activity, i.e.

(1) changes in hand and finger temperature
(2) muscle tension
(3) heart rate

## *LEARN TO MONITOR YOUR OWN PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO STRESS*

### THREE STRESS OPTIONS

Think about **whether the stressors are under your control** or not.
Then decide:

1. CHANGE THE SITUATION
2. and/or CHANGE YOUR RESPONSE to the situation
3. and/or RELAX, LET GO and TAKE CARE of YOURSELF

### THE 24 HOUR RULE

If something is causing you to be angry/frustrated and build stress, **GET IT OUT** within 24 hours or **LET IT GO**!!!!!

## *STRESS MANAGEMENT PERSONAL WORKSHEET*

1. Think about your typical work day. Are there situations that come up on a regular basis that cause you to feel stress? Jot down a few notes here.

2. Think about your own response to the person or situation. How is your reaction feeding your stress?

3. How could you respond differently (from within or outwardly directed) to break the stress pattern you have developed?

## *STRESS MANAGEMENT PERSONAL WORKSHEET*

4. Write about an example of your stress level at a high within the last few days [from work or home].

5. Did you create more stress by replaying/ worrying/ "listening" to negative thoughts in your head?

6. What/when could you have helped yourself rather than digging a deeper hole?

## *RELAXATION*

### DEEP BREATHING:

- It is a form of relaxation
- Here's how:

1. Sit in a comfortable position, arms at your sides, shoulders relaxed.
2. **Inhale** slowly through your **nose**, making you abdomen rise. Your chest, rib cage and shoulders should not move at all. Only the abdomen swells as the lower lungs fill with air.
3. **Exhale** slowly and completely through your **mouth**, with the chest and abdominal area collapsing and falling inward. In this type of breathing your **stomach goes out to inhale and is sucked in to exhale.**
4. Practice about 10 cycles.
5. Practice deep abdominal breathing as you sit, stand and walk – on the job or anywhere!

Having a **hobby** as a **stress reliever**:

- Hobbies require focused attention, thus taking your mind off your worries.
- Give you personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment.
- They are entirely under your control and the more control you have, the less stress you feel!

## VISUALIZE YOUR WAY TO RELAXATION

Mental imagery is another effective method of reducing stress. A little like a daydream, mental imagery uses both sight and sound to help you relax.

- Get comfortable
- Close your eyes. Do your "deep breathing"
- Visualize a peaceful, relaxing scene. Try one of the following images or make up one of your own:

Picture yourself walking on a deserted beach. Hear the gentle hiss of the waves coming ashore. Feel the soft sand under your feet. Let the warmth of the sun untie the knots of tension all over your body.

Place yourself on a mountain top with a tropical garden just below. See the glistening dew on the surrounding trees. Listen for the sound of a waterfall in the distance.

Envision a cloud floating down, enveloping you and supporting you completely as you float away. Feel the air as it flows over your body. Listen to the calming winds

## TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 2

I. Review deep breathing, etc.; answer questions; discuss opportunities to use techniques during the last week.

II. Communicating clearly to reduce stress/stressful situations.
FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

Using the hand-outs as aids, highlight and discuss the following with examples to clarify:

A. Recognize the causes of stress on the job – have participants contribute their thoughts on their job stress

B. Combat job stress – brainstorm suggestions and discuss

C. Active listening
⇒ Role-play and discuss

Develop role-play from participant suggestions for probable job stress situations and then act out for job application; refer to flip charts to cement learning

D. "I" messages
⇒ Role-play and discuss

Develop role-play from participant suggestions for probable job stress situations and then act out for job application; refer to flip charts to concretize learning

E. Personality differences – ask open ended questions to expand participant awareness to recognize and accept differences in each other, thereby keeping a handle on stress

III. Summary

## *MANAGING STRESS ON THE JOB ◆ SESSION 2*

### OBJECTIVES:

- Learn about good communication skills
- Communicate to reduce or minimize stress
- Utilize these techniques at work and at home

### TOPICAL OUTLINE:

- Communication – It's *how* you say it.
- Active listening
- "I" messages
- Personality differences

### METHODS:

- Discussion and hand outs
- Working in small groups
- Role plays
- Completing worksheets

### EVALUATION:

- Verbal participation
- Completing worksheets
- Coaching/helping one another in skill development

## *COMMUNICATION AS PART OF STRESS MANAGEMENT*

Stress is often caused, remains unresolved or worsened by:

- an inability to communicate effectively with yourself
- an inability to communicate effectively with others

You communicate poorly with yourself when you:

- lack objectivity
- respond to "old tapes" which may produce unhealthy behavior, but may have helped you cope in the past
- blame others for causing your stress
- believing you are a helpless victim
- focus on life's unfairness

You can communicate honestly and productively with yourself if you:

- are objective in evaluating the situation and understand how your own feelings may be adding to your stress.
- acknowledge how you contributed to the stressful situation or problem. Learn from the experience by changing your behavior.
- believe in your ability to combat stress. MANAGE the stress, don't be helpless. Believing in your ability to combat stress helps you maintain your self-confidence and avoids prolonged anxiety and depression.

You can't effectively manage a stressful situation unless you can communicate well. Some **common** communication **pitfalls** are:

- taking stress out on others
- focusing on the symptoms, not the problem
- being reluctant to ask for support

## *COMMUNICATION AS PART OF STRESS MANAGEMENT*

**Three** elements of **effective communication** are:

- Tell people how you feel.
- Try to identify the real issue.
- Communicate in a constructive, non-confrontational fashion by:

1. avoiding making accusations
2. get feedback from the other party
3. focus on **solutions** – not the problem

If you and another person experience a conflict that produces stress, avoid getting into a direct confrontation. Try:

- listening while the other party vents his or her anger
- keep your own stress in check
- give feedback – indicate that you understood what the person said
- restate the fundamental issues
- encourage a dialogue
- keep the conversation aimed at solutions

## *STRESS: HOW VULNERABLE ARE YOU?*

Here is a "test" to help you make a quick assessment of your habits in regard to stress management. Find out if you have some bad habits that make your stress worse. Then consider what action YOU need to take if you are not pleased with your "test" results.

Score each item from 1 (almost always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time each statement applies to you.

_____ 1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.
_____ 2. I get seven to eight hours sleep at least four nights a week.
_____ 3. I give and receive affection regularly.
_____ 4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.
_____ 5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.
_____ 6. I smoke less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.
_____ 7. I take fewer than five alcoholic drinks a week.
_____ 8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.
_____ 9. I have an income adequate to meet my expenses.
_____10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.
_____11. I regularly attend club or social activities.
_____12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
_____13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.
_____14. I am in good health.
_____15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.
_____16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems; for example, chores, money and daily living issues.
_____17. I do something for fun at least once a week.
_____18. I am able to organize my time effectively.
_____19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or tea or cola drinks) during the day.
_____20. I take quiet time for myself during the day.

_____ **TOTAL**

To get your score, ADD up the figures and SUBTRACT 20. Any number over 30 indicates a vulner-ability to stress. You are **seriously vulnerable** if your score is **between 50 and 75**, and **extremely vulnerable if it is over 75.**

This test was developed by Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith of the Boston University Medical Center.

## *ACTIVE LISTENING*

Listening seems like an easy skill, but it really requires hard work.

Do you ever have trouble listening to messages from other people? What are your listening habits? Read each statement below. Circle "YES" if it is true for you most of the time. Circle "NO" if it is not true for you most of the time.

1. I wait and allow the other person to finish what he or she is saying before I speak
   YES NO

2. I pay attention even when I don't like the speaker.
   YES NO

3. I easily ignore distractions when I am listening.
   YES NO

4. I can easily remember what other people say to me.
   YES NO

5. I ask the speaker questions when I don't understand something.
   YES NO

6. I look at people when they are talking to me.
   YES NO

Your YES statements show that you already have some active listening habits. This shows that you are involved in the communication process and that you take responsibility for understanding the speaker's message.

Think about your NO statements. What steps could you take to change those listening habits?

Here's a tip: To check your understanding of a message, repeat the speaker's main points in your own words.

## *ACTIVE LISTENING*

**DID YOU KNOW:**

1. At least **75% of workers** say that they experience **stress at work**.

   Stress-related problems: illness, reduced productivity, etc, cost businesses many $$$$ each year.

2. Most stress experienced by workers arises from one or more of the following:

   - *a sense of lack of control*
   - *feeling a lack of recognition*
   - *uncertainty about the future*
   - *boredom*

**HERE ARE 5 STEPS EMPLOYEES CAN TAKE TO COMBAT JOB STRESS:**

1. Don't react – ACT! Identify the underlying issue.
2. Take control. Develop a strategy for addressing the issue.
3. Learn effective communication skills.
4. Create a means for combating boredom.
5. Know what you like about your job. Focus on enhancing those aspects.

## *STRESS REDUCING COMMUNICATION*

### "I" statements

* take responsibility for yourself, your feelings

### How is it done?

Focus on **YOUR FEELINGS** in reaction to someone's **BEHAVIOR**

"I feel.....state feeling..... when you do.....describe behavior....."

Stick with the issue at hand, NOT what happened yesterday, last week, last month, etc.

**No blaming or attacking** – that's like throwing gasoline on a flame. What's the result? Tempers will probably get out of control, no productive discussion of the immediate problem can occur, bad feelings grow and resentment builds until the next "problem" and then reactions will be out of proportion from stored up anger.

### Follow "I" statement with:

"Can we talk about this?"
(not hostile/aggressive but an invitation)

OR

"Let's talk about this so it doesn't become a problem, when are you willing to talk?"

## *STRESS REDUCING COMMUNICATION*

### "I" Statements Worksheet

Read the statements below and rewrite them following the "I" statement format. Discuss and advise each other in pairs.

1. I'm sick and tired of asking you for the production and inventory figures each month. Why can't you just get organized and have it ready?

2. Every time you bring that up it upsets me. What are you trying to do to me?

3. That's so stupid. Why did you do that?

4. You really have to get back from lunch on time to relieve me. It's not fair that I have to cut my lunch short to be back for that meeting.

5. Maybe you think you are just teasing and being funny but not everyone takes it that way.

## *STRESS REDUCING COMMUNICATION*

Read the statements below and decide which conveys the appropriate spirit of an "I" statement. Discuss your reasons in small groups.

1. I know that you don't want to hear this but I get very upset when you tell me over and over to "Hurry up!"

2. You keep messing up and it is making me angry.

3. I've got something to say and I want you to listen because you have me really angry!

4. When you kick the back of my chair, I feel agitated because I don't like it.

5. I'm upset because I see you helping others and you don't offer to help me.

## *CASE STUDY*

You have worked here for five years and have been on the same line for all that time. You are very good at your work because you know it so well and can work quickly. However, last week you were placed on another shift and are doing a different job. Your new supervisor wants to know what the problem is since you aren't as productive in this new job and you did have such a good reputation for being a good and quick worker.

You have been trying your best but the stress of it all is getting to you. You are also having trouble sleeping and seem to be tired a lot. Today you snapped at your sloppy co-worker and then your body language and sighing showed someone working in the cafeteria your annoyance for not being quick enough to deliver the food. You made a comment that caused an angry exchange of words.

- **Chances are this person needs some support. Will he/she get it this way?**

- **What are some strategies that could have been used to ease the tension?**

- **How would you want to be treated if this were you?**

- **As a by-stander, what could you have done?**

## TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 3

### Teaching Notes

I. Review and/or answer questions from previous sessions. Discuss opportunities to use learned techniques during the last week.
   A. Measure stress level – HAND-OUT – group discussion centering on life stresses and how these may be affecting your work; also used as another self awareness tool – i.e. you can manage and handle stress if you are aware of it and how it is affecting you

II. Reducing stress through proper nutrition – Present information on the following and draw out participants in discussion:
   A. Stress combating foods
   B. Stress irritating foods
      FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

III. Reducing stress through exercise – Present information on the following and draw participants in discussion:
   A. Physical and mental benefits
   B. Making/taking the time
      FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

IV. Reducing stress through planning/using time better
   A. Make a list
   B. Accomplishing tasks – emphasize making it manageable by breaking into sub steps
   C. Think about priorities – emphasize decision making
      HAND-OUT AND FLIP CHART
   D. Break-out groups (3) – Direct participants to discuss the variety of stress management techniques covered during the course for personal preference and comfort, and then to develop action plans to personally incorporate changes resulting in better stress management

## TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 3

V. Changes: slow process; ups and downs; believe in self; plan action and DO IT. Keep practicing.
   A. Think about a work situation causing you stress. Think about what is in your control; plan your course of action, remembering to use your stress management techniques. DISCUSS in (3) break-out groups.
   FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

VI. Personal response to stress – Stress scales
   A. HAND-OUT. Complete and discuss.

VII. Course evaluation

## *MANAGING STRESS ON THE JOB ◆ SESSION 3*

### OBJECTIVES:

- Increase awareness of personal stressors
- Reduce stress through exercise
- Reduce stress through good nutrition
- Reduce stress through better time use

### TOPICAL OUTLINE:

- Physical and mental benefits of exercise
- Stress "combating" foods
- Foods/drinks that make stress symptoms worse
- Time management skills

### METHODS:

- Discussion and hand outs
- Working in small groups
- Role plays
- Completing worksheets

### EVALUATION:

- Verbal participation
- Completing worksheets
- Coaching/helping one another in skill development

## *SOCIAL READJUSTMENT RATING SCALE*

**LOOK AT THE POSSIBLE STRESS OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR:**

| Value | Life event |
|---|---|
| 100 | Death of spouse |
| 73 | Divorce |
| 65 | Marital separation |
| 63 | Jail term |
| 63 | Death of close family member |
| 53 | Personal injury or loss |
| 50 | Marriage |
| 47 | Fired at work |
| 45 | Marital reconciliation |
| 45 | Retirement |
| 44 | Change in health of family member |
| 40 | Pregnancy |
| 39 | Sex difficulties |
| 39 | Gain of new family member |
| 39 | Business readjustment |
| 38 | Change in financial state |
| 37 | Death of a close friend |
| 36 | Change to a different line of work |
| 35 | Change in the number of arguments with spouse |
| 31 | Mortgage over $100,000 |
| 30 | Foreclosure of mortgage or loan |
| 29 | Change in responsibilities at work |
| 29 | Son or daughter leaving home |
| 29 | Trouble with in-laws |
| 28 | Outstanding personal achievement |
| 26 | Spouse begins or stops work |
| 26 | Begin or end school |
| 25 | Change in living conditions |
| 24 | Revision of personal habits |
| 23 | Trouble with boss |

## SOCIAL READJUSTMENT RATING SCALE

| | |
|---|---|
| 20 | Change in work hours or conditions |
| 20 | Change in residence |
| 20 | Change in schools |
| 19 | Change in recreation |
| 19 | Change in church activities |
| 19 | Change in social activities |
| 15 | Mortgage or loan of less than $100,000 |
| 15 | Change in sleeping habits |
| 15 | Change in eating habits |

Originally a "300" point score was considered as a "danger level" above which the individual has a 90% chance of a major health problem as a result of stress and change. Today, stress experts recognize that individual differences plus learned strategies of stress management can alter stress and change tolerances.

# *NUTRITION*

## You are what you eat?

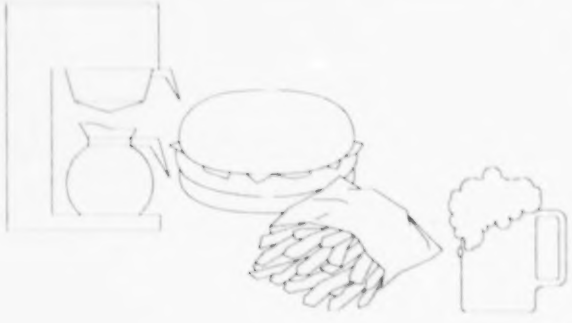
When you eat poorly you make it hard for your body to withstand the chemical demands of stress. You also put yourself at risk for illnesses such as heart disease and high blood pressure. [**Junk food, salty, full of sugar, empty calories**]

When you under stress, your body uses up important vitamins and minerals faster. You will run down mentally and physically. Your immune system is affected and you become more likely to become ill.

- INCREASE VITAMIN C to combat short term stress
- PROTEIN, CALCIUM AND POTASSIUM to combat ongoing, pervasive stress in addition to increasing Vitamin C

## Stress-Irritating Foods

- Foods high in fat – hard to digest
- Depressants and stimulants – alcohol and caffeine



## *REACTIONS TO STRESS*

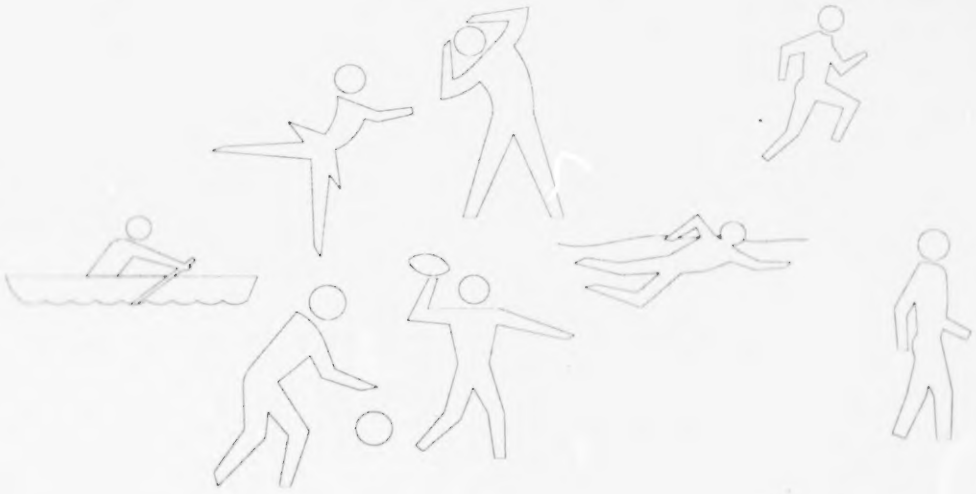
When you are coping with stress, do you change your behavior in any of the following ways?

- Depend too much on others/ relationships _____
- Make unrealistic demands to get the attention and companionship of others _____
- Isolate yourself from family, friends, co-workers _____
- Avoid dealing with stressful situations by involving yourself in non-threatening situations (work, children, etc.) _____
- Become helpless by deferring to others or delay decision-making _____
- Have a sense of purposelessness. Can't get organized _____
- Assume a weak, helpless role of victim _____
- Blame someone else for the problem _____
- Avoid acknowledging stress by becoming hyperactive, over organized _____
- Focus on others' problems, not your own _____
- Quick to provide the "right" answer, offer expert advice_____

## *STRESS AND EXERCISE*

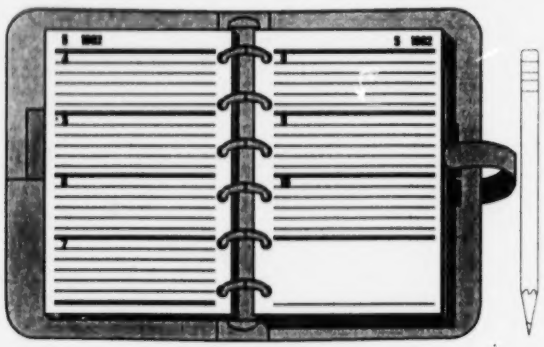
Exercise increases your energy level:

- ◊ The more oxygen you breathe in from the air, the more energy and stamina you will have
- ◊ Regular exercise increases your body's ability to draw more oxygen out of the air you breathe
- ◊ Exercise makes your muscles more flexible – you won't tire as easily
- ◊ If you don't want to go to the gym and pay fees to get your exercise: WALK:
  - ⇒ Walking lowers the blood pressure
  - ⇒ Walking controls stress by increasing the relaxation hormones in the brain
  - ⇒ Walking promotes weight loss and weight control by burning calories
- ◊ Make the time in your schedule. Your health and the stress reducing benefits are important.



# *MANAGING YOUR TIME*

**THE MAJOR CAUSES OF GOING CRAZY OVER DEADLINES ARE PROCRASTINATION AND PERFECTIONISM.**



- Decide what you need to do – plan the steps to be taken
- Do the important things first
- Trying to be perfect wastes time and you will never be perfect
- Set goals and priorities
- Make a "to do" list
- If the situation is in your control – take action instead of fretting about it
- Time management strategies aim to make your life easier and more flexible – not to cram in as much as you can

## *STRESS – CASE STUDY 1*

Because of some worries/problems at home, Arnold is under a great deal of stress. His temper is short and he is not sleeping well. It seems that today everything/everyone is getting on his nerves. His supervisor has just come over to tell him about the third mistake he has made this week. He/She is showing some frustration because of the slow down in production Arnold's mistake has created.

⇒ How do you think Arnold will react to the supervisor?

⇒ Using some of the stress management techniques we've discussed, what pro-active steps could he take?

⇒ How might the outcome be different?

## *CASE STUDY 2*

You can see that Carol has been upset by a complaint call from a customer. {*STRESS!!*} Jack just went up to Carol to ask about the report that she is working on with him and she told him that by this afternoon she would have her rough draft and they could work on it together. Jack became impatient at this, {*STRESS!!*} and asked her what is taking her so long? You can see Carol's jaw clenched {*STRESS!!*} and you know there is going to be trouble.

⇒ What do you think might happen next?

⇒ What "I" statements could Carol or Jack make?

⇒ How could each of them reduce the stress?

## *CASE STUDY 3*

The harness area had planned on getting that rush project done, and cleared just about all other work for the day. However, the staff in purchasing didn't get the order request out because of a computer problem and therefore, the materials are not available now. A delay like this throws off the schedules and planning of all the departments involved. Stress levels are up and agitation can be heard in people's voices/comments.

⇒ What is happening here?

⇒ Are people from different departments blaming one another?

⇒ What would help to reduce stress on the job?

## *CASE STUDY 4*

Yesterday at 2:30 your department was asked to get out a RUSH for a customer and have it out by 4 pm! Although not completely impossible, everything would have to go right in order to get this done. Of course, everything did not go "right".

List some of the things that **could or have** happened which cause you and your co-workers to be unable to fill the customers request.

Which human factors add to the stress?

- ⇒ lack of communication
- ⇒ blaming
- ⇒ jumping to conclusions
- ⇒ getting "stuck" on the problem instead of looking for a solution

## *DANGER*

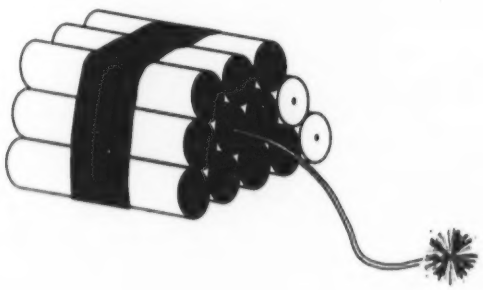
Learn the H.A.L.T. approach to managing stressful communications:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| H | – | Hungry |
| A | – | Angry |
| L | – | Lonely |
| T | – | Tired |

If you are experiencing two of the above, you would be better off waiting to have the discussion at some later time.

If you are experiencing three of the above, you can be sure that the issue under discussion will get lost in the turn of negativity.

If you are experiencing all four at once, RED ALERT – DANGER ZONE!!!!!!!!



Other bits of advice:

Lack of sleep will make you irritable and also throw off your chances for sound sleep.

Learn to accept what you cannot change. Acceptance does not mean approval, consent, permission, agreement, aiding or even *liking* what is. When you accept, you relax; you let go. You stop wasting energy on hating or struggling with a situation. Then when/if a window of opportunity comes up later, you'll have the objectivity to see it.

## *DANGER*

What is needed to manage the stress of change?

**BALANCE:** **use your common sense**

**SMALL STEPS:** **work on the smaller parts of the overall change and build little by little to the larger change. This by far increases your chance of success**

Task: From your list on "Name that Stress" select your top 3 and break down the changes which need to be made for each, into its smaller parts.

## *CASE STUDY 1*

You have just been informed that your job, which you have been doing for 3 years, is being merged with another job. You will be trained for the "merged" job or you will be re-assigned. Your supervisor wants to meet with you this afternoon when she/he returns from a meeting.

Several co-workers were talking in the lunch room about the changes being made by the "higher-ups". They were upset that those making the changes don't really seem to know what's going on out on the "floor" and how it throws things off. Listening to all this has gotten you upset and angry.

Imagine the conversation you will have with your supervisor.

⇒ What are the important things for you to say?

⇒ What will your attitude be as you go in to the meeting?

⇒ How will your attitude help or hinder?

⇒ How will you manage your stress during the meeting?

## CASE STUDY 2

As is often the case, there are rumors going around that some changes in staff will be made (that is, some may be laid-off, others may be transferred, and some may be promoted). What this will mean as far as changes all the way down the production line are unknown. The "unknown" leaves people worrying and feeling out of control, and consequently **stressed.**

⇒ What do you think the effect of this is on morale?

⇒ Do you participate in the "rumor" discussions?

⇒ What are the small steps you can take to feel more in control?

* Do you need to stop listening to the complainers?
* Do you need to stop agitating yourself with over working and complaining?
* Do you need to ask some direct questions to get some answers from a supervisor or manager? What are they?
* Do you have some specific suggestions to make to the supervisor/manager?

## NAME THAT STRESS

Take a few minutes to think about some of the stressful situations on your job.

List or describe as many as you can below:

1. _____( )
2. _____( )
3. _____( )
4. _____( )
5. _____( )
6. _____( )
7. _____( )
8. _____( )
9. _____( )
10. _____( )

Review your list and rank order the job stresses, making the most stressful example #1 and so on [indicate your order in the ( ) at the end of the line].

## *NAME THAT STRESS*

***Think about it.....***

**?????**

Are your *stress reactions* to the above all the same?

_____

_____

_____

_____

**?????**

What similarities or differences are there and why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

**?????**

What do you need more information on/help with to manage your stress?

_____

_____

_____

_____